

I am writing to you today to express my sincere displeasure at even the thought of allowing cellular telephone use aboard aircraft.

I live in San Francisco and fly transcontinental flight to Boston six times a year, as well as several shorter flights to other locations for both business and pleasure. Airline travel today has long lost the comfort, quality, and style of the early days of aviation. Gone are big, comfortable seats, friendly stewardesses, edible food, and civility among passengers. Allowing people to talk on their cell phones would turn an already unpleasant six hour flight into an unbearable one.

I have been on trains and I have been on busses where I was forced to sit next to or near someone who was chatting away on their cell phone. And I have to tell you, I really don't care to know the intimate details of someone's love life, medical problems, business initiatives, or plans for the evening, and I have heard all of them discussed while on public transit. And of course, with several people talking on their cell phones on top of the normal noise of public transit, everyone feels the need to yell into their phones just to be heard. I have even witnessed two people becoming extremely confrontational with each other when one person thought the other was talking too loudly. The only reason I can tolerate all this is that I know it will not be long-lived.

A six hour flight is another matter altogether. There is no where to go to escape the chatter. You cannot get up and move away from someone who is talking next to you, nor can they go somewhere to talk without annoying other passengers. If people had common sense and manners, or if aircraft had closed-door telephone booths, I would have no problem with cell phone use aboard aircraft. But unfortunately, we live in a society where these human decency traits are lacking, and aircraft are too cramped for privacy.

I urge you not to allow cell phones on aircraft. They will be a nuisance and lead to altercations between passengers. However, if you MUST allow cell phone use aboard aircraft, PLEASE, and I beg of you, please limit it to the last 30 minutes or 60 minutes of the flight. This would allow business travelers as well as leisure travelers plenty of time to arrange transportation from the airport to wherever they are going. And I could handle 30 minutes of incessant talking as at least there would be a foreseeable end.

I would much prefer you invest your time, effort, and technology into silent forms of communication. Wireless internet access aboard aircraft as well as allowing text messaging and the like would enable people who absolutely needed it to communicate without annoying or disturbing those around them.

Thank you for your time.